

MINUTES
Montana Hard-Rock Mining Impact Board Conference Call
Originating in Helena, Montana
January 8, 2008

Chairman Tinsley, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m., January 8, 2008.

Members participating were:

Ed Tinsley, Chair (Helena) present at the Department of Commerce site.
Mary Ellen Cremer (Big Timber) by telephone
Kris Koss (Custer) by telephone
Marianne Roose (Eureka) by telephone

Member absent:

Shain Wolstein (Butte)

Others present by telephone:

In Columbus:

John Beaudry, Stillwater Mining Company

Present at the Department of Commerce were:

Kelly Casillas, Attorney, Community Development Division
Dave Cole, Community Development Division Administrator
Joe LaForest, Administrative Officer, Hard Rock Mining Impact Board
Ellen Hanpa, Board Assistant, Hard Rock Mining Impact Board
Warren McCullough, Bureau Chief, Environmental Management Bureau, Montana
Department of Environmental Quality

MINUTES

Ms. Roose moved to accept the minutes of the October 30, 2007 conference call. Ms. Cremer seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously by a voice vote.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

MINE UPDATES

Warren McCullough, Bureau Chief, Environmental Management Bureau, Montana Department of Environmental Quality gave an update on the Golden Sunlight Mine at Whitehall, the Montana Tunnels Mine at Jefferson City, Montana Resources in Butte, and the Montanore, Rock Creek and Troy mines in Lincoln County. The summer of 2007 was one of the busiest for mining exploration in Montana in years, being fueled by the continuing high prices for metals. (As if to punctuate Mr. McCullough's report, the price per ounce of gold broke an all time record on the day of this meeting at \$880.)

The Golden Sunlight mine has applied for a pit expansion that will be treated as a minor revision by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The mine will have another five years of activity with the expansion. The suits over the pit backfill plan continue.

Montana Tunnels is nearing completion of its draft EIS for expansion of its mining operation. The same company is also mining at Elkhorn at a mine being called the Golden Dream. It appears that the activity at the Golden Dream will remain below the requirement for an impact plan.

The Department of Environmental Sciences is negotiating with Montana Resources on the renewal of their bond. At the present time there is a wide difference between the two offers.

The Troy Mine is producing about 2600 tons a day which will give the mine about another five years of expectancy. The Environmental Assessment for their final reclamation has been approved by DEQ.

The Rock Creek Mine has received approval of its plans for its adit by the Forest Service and DEQ is about to approve it. Production is still several years away.

When the Montanore Mine was purchased by Mines Management, Inc. (MMI, a dormant operating permit from DEQ went with it. The air quality permit from DEQ and the Forest Service permits had expired. MMI has received an amendment to the operating permit to allow dewatering of the adit. The water treatment plant is complete and dewatering will begin in the near future.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. LaForest explained the proposed changes in the Board's Administrative Rules (ARM); the changes update references and the Commerce Department's address. The proposed ARM change is attached to the permanent copy of these minutes.

Ms. Cremer moved to accept the changes to the ARM as proposed. Ms. Koss seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

The changes will be filed with the Secretary of State's office on January 22, 2008. A public hearing will be held on February 25, 2008 at the Department of Commerce, 301 South Park Avenue, Room 226 at 10 a.m. Comments will be accepted until March 6, 2008.

BOARD MATTERS

Mr. Cole stated that the Department of Commerce is considering proposing legislation to seek statutory appropriations that allows the transfer of funds in the Hard Rock Mining Impact Trust Account to the counties of origin. The funds are accumulated in the Trust Account from the metal mines licensing tax. By statute funds over and above the Hard Rock Mining Impact Board's administrative expenses and reserve are to be returned to the county where the mining is occurring.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Cremer moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Koss seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Ed Tinsley, Chair
Hard Rock Mining Impact Board

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Linda Stangland, Board Assistant
Hard Rock Mining Impact Board